

## THE SECURITY CRISIS IN THE MED AN HOLISTIC APPROACH

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### Abstract

Since the 1970s, Turkish foreign policy has adopted a confrontational posture towards fellow NATO member Greece and neighbouring EU member Cyprus<sup>1</sup> that have undermined regional security in the Mediterranean Sea, NATO core values and the chance to join the EU. Revanchism and revisionism<sup>2</sup> (Pan-Turkism) have been mainstays in Turkish discourse that ideologically fuelled the reiterated illegal infringement<sup>3</sup> in the Greek and Cypriot vital maritime space, interconnected aerial space<sup>4</sup> and the policy of questioning the sovereignty<sup>5</sup> of the Greek islands. Unilateralism is the motive for Ankara's failure to sign the internationally relevant legal instruments to regulate neighbouring relations. The recent friendship

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<sup>1</sup> Ioannidis Nikolaos, May 26 (2014), *The Continental Shelf Delimitation Agreement Between Turkey and "TRNC"*, EJIL:Talk

<https://www.ejiltalk.org/the-continental-shelf-delimitation-agreement-between-turkey-and-trnc/>

<sup>2</sup> Murinson Alexander, *The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy* (2006) Middle Eastern Studies 42, no. 6, 945–64

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/4284512>

<sup>3</sup> Kefalogiannis Manolis (PPE), *Total disregard for the principles of international law on the part of Turkey and direct threat to the sovereign rights of Greece and Cyprus*, Question for written answer, E-004174/2019 to the Commission Rule 138

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2019-004174\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2019-004174_EN.html)

<sup>4</sup> Reuters, *Greece, Turkey trade barbs over Aegean airspace incursions*, April 28, 2022 Available at <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/greece-says-turkish-overflights-aegean-undermine-nato-unity-2022-04-28/>

<sup>5</sup> Reuters, *Erdogan accuses Greece of 'occupying' demilitarised islands*, September 3, 2022 Available at

[https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/erdogan-accuses-greece-occupying-demilitarised-islands-2022-09-](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/erdogan-accuses-greece-occupying-demilitarised-islands-2022-09-03/#:~:text=ISTANBUL%2C%20Sept%20%20(Reuters),necessary%22%20when%20the%20ti)

[03/#:~:text=ISTANBUL%2C%20Sept%20%20\(Reuters\),necessary%22%20when%20the%20ti](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/erdogan-accuses-greece-occupying-demilitarised-islands-2022-09-03/#:~:text=ISTANBUL%2C%20Sept%20%20(Reuters),necessary%22%20when%20the%20ti)  
[me%20comes](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/erdogan-accuses-greece-occupying-demilitarised-islands-2022-09-03/#:~:text=ISTANBUL%2C%20Sept%20%20(Reuters),necessary%22%20when%20the%20ti)

agreements<sup>6</sup> with the Greeks and the emergence of new European issues<sup>7</sup> appear not to produce any tangible change in the main cores of Turkish Foreign policy or its documented gunboat diplomacy inconsistent with NATO values and EU aspirations. Given the new challenges in the Med and the uncooperative approach of Ankara, the EU and NATO should profit from compliant allies such as Greece and Cyprus to limit the effects of the Turkish destabilising actions by adopting a deterrent strategy consistent with the regional *coalition* initiated by Greece itself. Moreover, the EU and NATO allies should adopt a hard approach in the absence of formal agreements about sovereignty and rights among the quarrelling parties by internalising the Franco-American approach as a blueprint for a broad deterrent system, given the Russo-Chinese major attempts at altering the regional status quo of which Turkey is the willing self-interested tool.

## The Cypriot Factor in the Region

The Cyprus question and the ongoing occupation of the northern portion<sup>8</sup> has been treated as a peripheral issue, a one-time only provocation by a, supposedly, dissatisfied and downtrodden Turkey<sup>9</sup> instead of putting formally on the table the danger<sup>10</sup> of passing to silence when not implicitly condoning<sup>11</sup> gunboat diplomacy and patent violation of the sovereign right<sup>12</sup> and independence<sup>13</sup> of a EU country

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<sup>6</sup> Euronews, Greece and Turkey agree to reboot relations following landmark talks in Athens, 12 July 2023, Available at <https://www.euronews.com/2023/12/07/greece-and-turkey-agree-to-reboot-relations-following-landmark-talks-in-athens>

<sup>7</sup> DW, Türkiye-Yunanistan gerginliğinde yeni safha, Gülsen Solaker, 3 June 2022 Available at <https://www.dw.com/tr/g%C3%BCIsen-solaker/person-58296435>

<sup>8</sup> Joint Declaration adopted by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece and the United Arab Emirates (05 November 2020) Available at <https://www.mfa.gr/en/current-affairs/statements-speeches/joint-declaration-adopted-by-the-ministers-of-foreign-affairs-of-cyprus-egypt-france-greece-and-the-united-arab-emirates-11052020.html>

<sup>9</sup> Verdica, Mateescu Dragos, *Nationalist metanarrative and false sub-narratives in Turkey*, 03 Dec 2020 Available at <https://www.veridica.ro/en/analyses/nationalist-metanarrative-and-false-sub-narratives-in-turkey>

<sup>10</sup> Ekathimerini, *Turkey threatens Greek Cypriots with measures over gas drilling*, 13 July 2017 Available at <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/220033/turkey-threatens-greek-cypriots-with-measures-over-gas-drilling/>

<sup>11</sup> Politico, Straw Jack, *We should never have let Cyprus join the EU*, 7 September 2023 Available at <https://www.politico.eu/article/cyprus-eu-vladimir-putin-russia/>

<sup>12</sup> DW, Winter Chase, *Pipeline dreams and gunboat diplomacy in Med*, 04 February 2018 Available at <https://www.dw.com/en/gas-pipeline-dreams-and-gunboat-diplomacy-in-mediterranean/a-43228234>

<sup>13</sup> Euractiv, Gotev Georgi, *EU warns Central Asia of 'negative effects' of appeasing Turkey with North Cyprus*, 20 Sep 2023 Available at <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/eu-warns-central-asia-of-negative-effects-over-appeasing-turkey-with-north-cyprus/>

by weaponizing separatists<sup>14</sup> to create an illegal Exclusive Economic Zone<sup>15</sup> through a breakaway Republic.<sup>16</sup> Turkish systematic violation of International Law did not stop at Cyprus however. Ankara has been exploiting Cyprus' marginality in the political discourse as a tool for increasing infringement to the detriment also of neighbouring Greece and as a green card to contribute to destabilising the whole Mediterranean such as in Libya,<sup>17</sup> within Syria,<sup>18</sup> the broad Levant<sup>19</sup> and beyond.<sup>20</sup> If NATO strategy in the Med has been inconsistent due to internal divisions, the EU broad security policy in the region has been even less shared beyond a few.<sup>21</sup> The need to antagonise Turkish illegal activities by supporting Cyprus and pressuring to end the occupation of its North is increasingly relevant<sup>22</sup> in an area where, as of today, the Israeli-Turkish relations are at its lowest, Erdogan's Islamist agenda represents a threat to Israel's security, the anti-Western rhetoric<sup>23</sup> creates anomalies within the Euro-Atlantic alliance and the Sino-Russian

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<sup>14</sup> Reuters, Gumrukcu Tuvan, *Turkey's Erdogan says two-state solution only option for Cyprus*, 10 February 2021 Available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN2AA17W/>

<sup>15</sup> Hurriyet, *Map delineates Turkey's maritime frontiers in Med Sea*, 03 December 2019 Available at <https://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/map-delineates-turkeys-maritime-frontiers-in-med-sea-149379>

<sup>16</sup> *Our vision for Two-State Solution*, The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Available at

<https://mfa.gov.ct.tr/cyprus-negotiation-process/our-vision-for-two-state-solution/>

<sup>17</sup>

[https://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/TREATIES/Turkey\\_11122019\\_%28HC%29\\_MoU\\_Libya-Delimitation-areas-Mediterranean.pdf](https://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/TREATIES/Turkey_11122019_%28HC%29_MoU_Libya-Delimitation-areas-Mediterranean.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> *Joint Statement by the Representatives of Iran, Russia, and Turkey on the 21th International Meeting on Syria in the Astana Format*, January 25, 2024 Available at

<https://syria-report.com/joint-statement-by-the-representatives-of-iran-russia-and-turkey-on-the-21th-international-meeting-on-syria-in-the-astana-format-january-25-2024/>

<sup>19</sup> Foundation for Defence of Democracy, *10 Things to Know About Hamas and Turkey*, November 29, 2023 Available at

<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2023/11/29/10-things-to-know-about-hamas-and-turkey/>

<sup>20</sup> Turkish Minute, *Turkish company, others hit by US sanctions for transferring US technology to Iran*, 15 February 2024 Available at

<https://www.turkishminute.com/2024/02/15/turkish-company-other-hit-by-us-sanctions-for-transferring-us-technology-to-iran/#:~:text=The%20Turkey%2Dbased%20Ted%20Teknoloji,hit%20by%20the%20OFAC%20sanctions>

<sup>21</sup> Associated Press, *Southern EU leaders urge Turkey to end 'unilateral' actions in Mediterranean Sea, threaten sanctions*, 10 September 2020 Available at

<https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2020/09/10/southern-eu-leaders-urge-turkey-to-end-unilateral-actions-in-mediterranean-sea-threaten-sa>

<sup>22</sup> *2023 U.S.-Republic of Cyprus Defense and Security Cooperation Dialogue*, 1 June 2023, US Department of Defense Available at

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3413883/2023-us-republic-of-cyprus-defense-and-security-cooperation-dialogue/>

<sup>23</sup> The Guardian, Wintour Patrick, Beaumont Peter, *US and UK intent on turning Red Sea into a bloodbath, says Turkey*, 12 January 2024, Available at

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/12/hezbollah-and-iran-condemn-us-and-uk-strikes-against-houthis>

compatibility<sup>24</sup>with Turkey becoming more organic than previously admitted and a base for its anti-American and anti-European manoeuvres in cooperation with Iran in the Middle East.<sup>25</sup>

## The Greek EEZ: A Broad Security Guarantee

Amids infringement to the Euro-atlantic security represented by Turkish risky cosyng up with Russia, China, and extremists in the region, the Greek EEZ (Economic Exclusive Zone), the internationally recognised continental shelf, represents a valuable asset for diversification and strategic security. The signatories to 1982 UNCLOS<sup>26</sup> do not include Turkey, thus showing back then the symptoms of unilateralism that is now a threat to Western security. Art 52 enshrines the fundamental rights of the EEZ. On the contrary, the said legal disposition was followed by the 1986 Turkish EEZ in the Black Sea which fits with it indirectly. When it comes to the East Med, Turkey has adopted a different approach by disavowing the implicit recognition of the validity of UNCLOS, thus confirming the dubious claims over the respective Greek and Cypriot EEZ and exposing the expansionist objectives in the Central and East Med that can be narratively explained through the lenses of Pan-Turkism. Turkey has doubled by additional claims such as the demilitarisation of the Greek Islands and the alleged<sup>27</sup> presence of grey areas where to undermine the sovereignty of the neighbours. Conversely, Greece has achieved considerable success by striking important deals with neighbouring Italy and Egypt. Cyprus struck similar agreements<sup>28</sup> with Israel and Lebanon. The whole mechanism has not been accepted by NATO member and EU candidate Turkey, therefore exposing a dangerous void in terms of adherence to International Law. This refusal with additional threats of invasion adds to the image of a transactional, at times belligerent, partner to NATO and a potentially inadmissible partner to the EU which would constitute a thorn to its side much in the same way Hungary is today. Moreover, the Turko-Libyan EEZ is not just illegal,<sup>29</sup> therefore not binding to third parties not adequately involved, but of

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<sup>24</sup> The Diplomat, Kuo A. Mercy, China-Russia Cooperation in Africa and the Middle East, 3 April 2023, Available at

<https://thediplomat.com/2023/04/china-russia-cooperation-in-africa-and-the-middle-east/>

<sup>25</sup> Nordic Monitor, Bozkurt Abdullah, Iran utilises Turkey as a support hub for Yemeni Proxy the Houthi Rebel, January 11 2024, Available at

<https://nordicmonitor.com/2024/01/iran-utilizes-turkey-as-a-support-hub-for-yemeni-proxy-the-houthi-rebels/>

<sup>26</sup> [https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention\\_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos\\_e.pdf](https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Nordic Monitor, Kenez Levent, *In a propaganda video, Turkish cadets show they can swim to the Greek island of Kastellorizo if necessary*, 3 January 2022 Available at

<https://nordicmonitor.com/2022/01/in-a-propaganda-video-turkish-cadets-show-that-they-can-swim-to-the-greek-island-if-necessary/>

<sup>28</sup> Gis Report Online, Nakhele Carole, *Lebanon and Israel's historic maritime border deal*, 9 February 2023 Available at <https://www.gisreportonline.com/r/israel-lebanon-maritime/>

<sup>29</sup> [https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/1\\_1\\_1969.pdf](https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/1_1_1969.pdf)

problematic concern to Greece,<sup>30</sup> therefore NATO-EU security in the face of the unpredictable Turko-Libyan axis, and to Egypt<sup>31</sup> itself despite recent attempts<sup>32</sup> at warming up.

## The Blue Homeland

The Western Powers relied on the established sovereignty<sup>33</sup> and demilitarisation<sup>34</sup> of the Aegean islands based on Turkish neutrality and goodwill, thus the need to prevent the Soviet Union from stepping into<sup>35</sup> the issue and become a security provider to Greece and Turkey both.<sup>36</sup> The ICJ (International Court of Justice) also avoided adjudicating the issue which gave Turkey the chance to keep the issue open to the advantage of its revisionist policy. In view of the recent developments however, Turkish Eurasianism and expansionism has progressed by developing the encompassing maritime claims<sup>37</sup> tied with the transactional approach<sup>38</sup> by Erdogan to the NATO Alliance. The Blue Line doctrine's<sup>39</sup> encompassing claims<sup>40</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Ekathimerini, *Vassilios Nedos, Libya declares contiguous zone of 24 nautical miles*, 9 February 2023 Available at

<https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1227991/libya-announces-12-nm-territorial-zone/>

<sup>31</sup> Reuters, *Turkey-Libya preliminary deal prompts Greece, Egypt to push back*, 3 October 2022 Available at

<https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/turkey-libyan-government-agree-preliminary-maritime-energy-deal-2022-10-03/>

<sup>32</sup> Al Jazeera, *Turkey and Egypt aiming to extend diplomatic thaw at Cairo summit*, 14 Feb 2024 Available at

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/14/turkey-and-egypt-seal-diplomatic-thaw-at-cairo-summit>

<sup>33</sup> *The Secretary of State's Special Assistant (Pasvolsky) to the Secretary of State*, MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY, 18 August 1943 Available at

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1943/d368>

<sup>34</sup> *Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Office of European Affairs (Matthews)*, PARIS, 1 October 1946 Available at

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v03/d276>

<sup>35</sup> *Interagency Intelligence Memorandum*, Washington, 21 June 1974 Available at

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v30/d15>

<sup>36</sup> *Intelligence Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency*, Washington, 30 August 1978 Available at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v21/d24>

<sup>37</sup> The National Herald, *Greece Said Ready to Extend Territorial Waters 12 Miles Off Crete*, December 27, 2022 Available at

<https://www.thenationalherald.com/greece-said-ready-to-extend-territorial-waters-12-miles-off-crete/>

<sup>38</sup> The Eurasian Times, Ritu Sharma, *Ejected From F-35, Blocked From Eurofighters, Turkey May Turn To China's JF-17 Thunder*, December 13, 2023 Available at

<https://www.eurasiantimes.com/jf-17-thunder-right-alternative-to-eurofighter-typhoons/#:~:text=With%20no%20forward%20movement%20on,17%20Thunder%2C%20as%20per%20reports.>

<sup>39</sup> Ekathimerini, Diakopoulos Alexandros, Liakouras Petros, Ifantis Kostas, Filis Constantinos, *Behind Turkey's 'Blue Homeland' doctrine*, 19 June 2023 Available at

<https://www.ekathimerini.com/opinion/1213618/behind-turkeys-blue-homeland-doctrine/>

<sup>40</sup> Ahval, Aktar Cengiz, *Turkey's expanding naval horizons*, 2 December 2019, Available at <https://ahvalnews.com/east-mediterranean/turkeys-expanding-naval-horizons>



have not been recognised by the International Community. In times of extremists<sup>41</sup> aiming to compromise Israel's and Western security, along with the Sino-Russian questioning of the International Law and the US-led world order, Turkey's non-signing of the relevant dispositions contained in the Maritime Law and lack of respect of territorial integrity by exploiting separatism in Cyprus seriously put into question the Rule of Law<sup>42</sup> and, broadly, NATO-EU security. Thus, while Turkey cannot afford<sup>43</sup> antagonising the US further, its increasing exploitation of extremists and reliance on Russia and China,<sup>44</sup> both practically and conceptually, shows how Turkish Eurasianism borrows from Russian Eurasianism so that the two appear at times similar in their scope of broad regional reconfiguration<sup>45</sup> at the West's expense and EU-NATO interests.<sup>46</sup> Turkish misinformation and conspiracy theories<sup>47</sup> compound and strengthen anti-Israeli<sup>48</sup> and Sino-Russian narratives in public fora campaigning for less US regional presence,<sup>49</sup> "multipolarity" and the alleged responsibility<sup>50</sup> of the West for the chaos in the Med. Turkey increasingly advocates for less EU-NATO involvement in the Med or in any geographical area where its cooperation with foes to NATO could

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<sup>41</sup> France 24, Mounier Jean Luc, Qatar, Iran, Turkey and beyond: Hamas' network, 14 October 2023, Available at <https://www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20231014-qatar-iran-turkey-and-beyond-the-galaxy-of-hamas-supporters>

<sup>42</sup> EJIL: talk, Andrew Norris, *Troubled Waters in the Eastern Mediterranean*, 24 August 2020 Available at <https://www.ejiltalk.org/troubled-waters-in-the-eastern-mediterranean/>

<sup>43</sup> *Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency*, Washington, 25 May 1978 Available at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v21/d21>

<sup>44</sup> The China Project, *Playing both sides: how Turkey takes advantage of China and Western Europe*, Colville Alex, 23 May 2023 Available at <https://thechinaproject.com/2023/05/23/playing-both-sides-how-turkey-takes-advantage-of-china-and-western-europe/>

<sup>45</sup> Ekathimerini, *Germany criticises Turkey over island dispute with Greece*, 29 July 2022 Available at <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1190208/germany-criticizes-turkey-over-island-dispute-with-greece/>

<sup>46</sup> Foreign Policy, *Why Turkey Took Its Time on Sweden*, Silverman Reuben, 28 January 28, 2024 Available at <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/01/28/turkey-sweden-nato-erdogan-foreign-policy-history-us-europe-west/>

<sup>47</sup> Yeni Savak, Sarac Sakir, *Siege*, 25 May 2019, Available at <https://www.yenisafak.com/dunya/kusatma-3472531>

<sup>48</sup> Daily News, *Netanyahu committing genocide in Gaza with Western Support: Erdogan*, 6 March 2024, Available at <https://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/netanyahu-committing-genocide-in-gaza-with-western-support-erdogan-191353>

<sup>49</sup> Seta, Acer Yucel, *5 Questions: The Meaning of the US Establishing a Military Base in Dedeğaç (Greece) and Its Effect on Turkey*, 30 July 2020 Available at <https://www.setav.org/5-soru-abdnin-dedeagac-yunanistanta-askeri-us-kurmasinin-anlami-ve-turkiyeye-etkisi/>

<sup>50</sup> Politico, GAVIN GABRIEL, *Mediator no more: Erdoğan takes aim at Israel, backing Hamas 'freedom' fighters*, 25 October 2023 Available at <https://www.politico.eu/article/turkey-recep-tayyip-erdogan-israel-hamas-war-freedom-fighters/#:~:text=Foreign%20Affairs-,Mediator%20no%20more%3A%20Erdo%C4%9Fan%20takes%20aim%20at%20Israel%2C%20backing%20Hamas,major%20break%20with%20NATO%20allies.>

pose a threat in terms of know-how.<sup>51</sup> Thus, inherent transactionalism<sup>52</sup> does not translate into broad NATO or regional security,<sup>53</sup> thus making appeasement dangerous given also the broad race between superpowers. Moscow and Beijing are all too eager to profit from the siege mentality<sup>54</sup> within the Turkish establishment, the worsening of US-Turkish relations,<sup>55</sup> the issues<sup>56</sup> between the US-Egypt<sup>57</sup> the Libyan chaos,<sup>58</sup> thus making the Israeli-Greco-Cypriot strategic cooperation to foster broad security and independence from them in the market, a question of EU-NATO strategic unity in a hot area. The Western balancing approach has not and does not offer short and long-term rewards as Turkey's maverick attitude compromises NATO objectives,<sup>59</sup> Israel's security and the US' regional role<sup>60</sup> in the Levant and the Med. Turkish ultranationalism and revisionism cannot be considered a peripheral issue. It compromises NATO objectives for regional stability<sup>61</sup> in the Med while leaving room to anti-Israeli manoeuvres,<sup>62</sup> Russian opportunism<sup>63</sup> in the region, along with China's aims at expansion.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Daily Sabah, Simsek Abdurrahman, Turkish drones disrupt ground war doctrines: Pentagon official, 11 February 2024, Available at <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkish-drones-disrupt-ground-war-doctrines-pentagon-official>

<sup>52</sup> Al-Monitor, Akin Ezgi, Turkey, Greece formally join German-led defence shield project, 15 February 2024, Available at <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2024/02/turkey-greece-formally-join-german-led-defense-shield-project>

<sup>53</sup> Politico, Gavin Gabriel, Turkey must stop blocking Ukraine minehunters, ex NATO Supreme Commander warns, 5 January 2024 Available at <https://www.politico.eu/article/turkey-must-stop-blocking-ukraine-minehunters-warn-ex-nato-supreme-commander-james-stavridis/>

<sup>54</sup> Anadolu, Adasoy Cenk Kaan, *Athens' Provocative Foreign Policy and persistent violation of international law*, 26, 04, 2021 Available at <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/analysis/opinion-athens-provocative-foreign-policy-and-persistent-violation-of-international-law/2221071>

<sup>55</sup> Politics Today, Noi Unver Aylin, *100 Years of Turkey-US Relations*, 14 November 2023 Available at <https://politicstoday.org/100-years-of-turkey-us-relations/>

<sup>56</sup> Middle East Institute, Mohamed Salah Amr, China's growing maritime presence in Egypt's port and the Suez Canal, 3 November 2023 Available at <https://www.mei.edu/publications/chinas-growing-maritime-presence-egypts-ports-and-suez-canal>

<sup>57</sup> The Times of Israel, Magid Jacob, US makes second Gaza aid airdrop, in joint cooperation with Jordan and Egypt, 5 March 2024, Available at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-makes-second-gaza-aid-airdrop-in-joint-operation-with-jordan-and-egypt/>

<sup>58</sup> Nova, Libya: Russia and China strengthen presence in Tripoli and Benghazi, 23 February 2024, Available at <https://www.agenzianova.com/en/news/Libya%2C-Russia-and-China-strengthen-their-presence-in-Tripoli-and-Benghazi/>

<sup>59</sup> [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf)

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.centcom.mil/ABOUT-US/COMMAND-PRIORITIES/>

<sup>61</sup> *Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Turkey* 2200Z, Washington, 3 October 1980, Available at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v21/d157>

<sup>62</sup> Aljazeera, Turkey detains 7 suspected of spying for Israel, 5 March 2024, Available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/3/5/turkey-detains-7-more-suspects-for-allegedly-selling-information-to-israel>

<sup>63</sup> Carnegie, Suleymanov Ruslan, *War in the Middle East Is Boosting Russia-Turkey Ties*, 15 November 2023 Available at <https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/91020#:~:text=Shared%20support%20for%20Hamis%20likely,ties%20will%20only%20be%20situational>

<sup>64</sup> Eurasian Times, Tiwari Sakshi, *First Russia, Now China: Turkey Set To Sign Deal With Beijing For Nuclear Power Plant*, 16 September 2023 Available at <https://www.eurasiantimes.com/first-russia-now-china-nato-member-turkey-set-to-sign-deal-wit/>

## Broad Deterrence in the East and Central Med to Turkish Unilateralism

Different sensibilities and interests have prevented a common NATO sanctioning approach to Ankara's provocations and lack of commitment. There is no NATO provision for threatening to expel non-compliant and belligerent members that, given Turkish illegal drillings off Cyprus' coasts and the friendly attitude to Hamas<sup>65</sup> and the Russo<sup>66</sup>-Chinese<sup>67</sup> Axis is a page-turner the alliance should finally adopt in order not to be subject to blackmail and breach to its internal security, know-how and unity. Broadly, Turkey's activism in Libya and illegal forays into the Greco-Cypriot vital spaces should prompt a more consistent EU-NATO stick and carrot policy, a more updated maritime policy that certain Mediterranean countries<sup>68</sup> choose to overlook by sticking to old narratives about Turkish goodwill and trustworthiness inconsistent with practical actions in the East and Central Med.

The mere sanctioning system appears<sup>69</sup> not to bring much change. The US<sup>70</sup> and France<sup>71</sup> have followed through and adopted a clearer and stronger response<sup>72</sup> to revanchist Turkey<sup>73</sup> by being the most outspoken NATO members regarding Turkish belligerent policy in the Med. Firstly, the Franco-American commitment in the East Med should become a more practical and consistent European *defensive identity* and, crucially, commitment to isolate, including by military

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<sup>65</sup> The Times of Israel, *Erdogan warns Israel of "very heavy price" if Hamas members harmed on Turkish soil*, 6 December 2023, Available at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/erdogan-warns-israel-of-very-heavy-price-if-hamas-members-harmed-on-turkish-soil/>

<sup>66</sup> Brookings, Taspinar Omer, *Turkey's purchase of Russian missile defence system will be paradigm shifting for its relations with the US*, 3 April 2019, Available <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/turkeys-purchase-of-russian-missile-defense-system-will-be-paradigm-shifting-for-its-relations-with-the-us/>

<sup>67</sup> The Eurasian News, Dangwal Ashish, *China overshadows US at Turkey's Defence Fair*, 2 August 2023, Available at <https://www.eurasiantimes.com/turkeys-seeks-to-buy-a-us20-billion-package-of-new/>

<sup>68</sup> Euractiv, Michalopoulos Sarantis, *Greece fumes over new Spain-Turkey armament deal*, 19 November 2021 Available at <https://www.euractiv.com/section/defence-and-security/news/greece-fumes-over-new-spain-turkey-armament-deal/>

<sup>69</sup> Anadolu, *Turkey to never compromise its sovereign rights in E.Med: Ministry*, Guler Sena, June 12 2020 Available at <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-to-never-compromise-its-sovereign-rights-in-emed-ministry/2066976>

<sup>70</sup> RFI, *Greece and US expand defence pact as tensions mount between Turkey and Europe*, 16 October 2021 Available at <https://www.rfi.fr/en/international/20211016-greece-and-us-expand-defence-pact-as-tensions-mount-between-turkey-and-europe>

<sup>71</sup> USNI NEWS, VAVASSEUR Xavier, *French Carrier Strike Group Begins 2021 Deployment*, 23 FEBRUARY 2021 Available at <https://news.usni.org/2021/02/23/french-carrier-strike-group-begins-2021-deployment>

<sup>72</sup> Reuters, *Greek parliament approves defence pact with France*, 7 October 2021 Available at <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/greece-france-defence-pact-protects-against-third-party-aggression-greek-pm-2021-10-07/>

<sup>73</sup> Anadolu, *French base in Southern Cyprus, US armament 'clear violations of Cyprus' founding agreements': Northern Cyprus president*, Ferik Kemal, 16 June 2023 Available at <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/french-base-in-southern-cyprus-us-armament-clear-violations-of-cyprus-founding-agreements-northern-cyprus-president/2923967>



presence/involvement in Cyprus<sup>74</sup> and Greece, and target Turkish military industry,<sup>75</sup> assets<sup>76</sup> and ties<sup>77</sup> in the region. The reality on the ground demands the US and European investment in the Greco-Cypriot defence systems<sup>78</sup> to work on interoperability and matching to Turkey. Equally, the East Mediterranean Gas Forum needs to gain an official *political dimension* as Israel increasingly becomes a more reliable security and trade partner.

However, Italy,<sup>79</sup> a southern EU-NATO country challenged<sup>80</sup> by Turkey itself in North Africa and off Cypriot coasts,<sup>81</sup> has been remarkably inconsistent<sup>82</sup> when not unwisely silent<sup>83</sup> or receptive to Turkish claims,<sup>84</sup> thus representing a questionable realist guarantor of the broad Mediterranean security,<sup>85</sup> particularly in the context

<sup>74</sup> *The Trumpet*, Michelis J., *Germany Intensifies Its Military Cooperation With Cyprus*, 16 November, 2023 Available at <https://www.thetrumpet.com/28517-germany-intensifies-its-military-cooperation-with-cyprus>

<sup>75</sup> POMPEO MICHAEL R., *The United States Sanctions Turkey Under CAATSA 231*, PRESS STATEMENT, SECRETARY OF STATE 14 DECEMBER 2020 Available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/the-united-states-sanctions-turkey-under-caatsa-231/#:~:text=Today%2C%20the%20United%20States%20is,main%20arms%20export%20entity%2C%20by>

<sup>76</sup> CGEP, Corbeau Anne-Sophie & Mitrova Tatiana, *Russia's Gas Export Strategy: Adapting to the New Reality*, 21 February, 2024 Available at <https://www.energypolicy.columbia.edu/publications/russias-gas-export-strategy-adapting-to-the-new-reality/>

<sup>77</sup> The Cradle, German, Dutch troops in Cyprus for possible Gaza escalation, 19 October 2023 Available at <https://thecradle.co/articles-id/7825>

<sup>78</sup> Shaping the future of Hellenic Defence Industry, Hellenic Manufacturers of Defence Material Association, 28 February 2028 <https://ln5.sync.com/dl/b02103b30/zbf4ya7v-dv4vmi87-4kaeidsk-tvafgvr7/view/doc/12790109550002>

<sup>79</sup> Halarar Libya, Muyad Farad, *Libya is at the forefront of Erdogan and Meloni's discussions*, 22 January 2024 Available at <https://libyaalahrar.net/libya-is-at-the-forefront-of-erdogan-and-melonis-discussions/>

<sup>80</sup> Forbes, Palleschi Cosimo, *Il triello del Mediterraneo: la politica estera ed energetica di Italia, Turchia e Russia si gioca in Libia* 13, April 2023 Available at <https://forbes.it/2023/04/13/libia-dove-italia-gioca-politica-estera-energetica/>

<sup>81</sup> Energie Oltre, *Perché con la nave Eni bloccata dalla Turchia si rischia una crisi diplomatica su Saipem 12000*, 13 Febbraio 2018 Available at <https://energiaoltre.it/perche-la-nave-eni-bloccata-dalla-turchia-si-rischia-cri-si-diplomatica/>

<sup>82</sup> Agenzia Nova, Migranti, *Giannotta (Cespi): "Possibile collaborazione funzionale tra Italia e Turchia in Libia"*, 7 Febbraio 2024 Available at <https://www.agenzianova.com/news/migranti-giannotta-cespi-possibile-collaborazione-funzionale-tra-italia-e-turchia-in-libia/>

<sup>83</sup> Formiche, Stefano Pioppi, *Libia e Mediterraneo, perché la Turchia resta un alleato. L'incontro tra Guerini e Akar*, 10 September 2020 Available at <https://formiche.net/2020/10/italia-turchia-guerini-akar/>

<sup>84</sup> Decode39, *Eni's Descalzi says Ankara is needed to resume EastMed efforts*, 18 May 2023 Available at <https://decode39.com/6761/eni-descalzi-turkey-needed-eastmed/>

<sup>85</sup> ISPI, Gilli Alessandro, *Turchia: nuovo hub energetico nel Mediterraneo*, 28 Nov 2022 Available at <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/turchia-nuovo-hub-energetico-nel-mediterraneo-36802>

of the EastMed Gas Forum<sup>86</sup> and the “gas alliance”<sup>87</sup> between Greece, Cyprus, Egypt and Israel that would foster EU-NATO interests<sup>88</sup> in transitioning from Russian dependence and counter<sup>89</sup> Turkish expansionism. The partners should demand Italy to think in the long-term<sup>90</sup> instead of the short-term<sup>91</sup> which would send Turkey the message that encroaching upon the NATO-EU member’s maritime space, along with Cypriot rights and sovereignty in the East Med, is a negligible issue in the hope of being allowed to have a piece of the Libyan cake,<sup>92</sup> in the East Med<sup>93</sup> and in the case of Cyprus specifically<sup>94</sup> without a consistent political commitment to counter Turkey. Moreover, the Turkish pledge to stop migration appears to be questionable<sup>95</sup> given the adopted strategy contrary<sup>96</sup> to the broad EU-NATO objective to de-escalate and favour genuine cooperation.

Cooperation with Greece and Cyprus within the Franco-American framework should lead to a broad EU-NATO commitment at isolating Turkey, something the Italian so-called Mattei Plan appears to be overlooking by relying on Turkish goodwill and short-term considerations contradicting other broad commitments that should serve as a framework for isolating and coercing Turkey to drop unilateral, overreaching aims. The broad picture about Cyprus and Greece not

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<sup>86</sup> [https://emgf.org/pages/emgf/all\\_members.aspx](https://emgf.org/pages/emgf/all_members.aspx)

<sup>87</sup> France24, *Cyprus, Israel, Greece to focus on energy cooperation*, 04 September 2023 Available at <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20230904-cyprus-israel-greece-to-focus-on-energy-cooperation>

<sup>88</sup> Libya Observer, Mohammed Libya, *Turkish-Italian consultations on the situation in Libya*, 18 February 2024 Available at <https://libyaobserver.ly/inbrief/turkish-italian-consultations-situation-libya>

<sup>89</sup> Libya Observer, ALHARATHY SAFA, *Turkish Energy Minister: Turkey and Libya head towards more cooperation in oil field*, 9 November 2022 Available at <https://libyaobserver.ly/economy/turkish-energy-minister-turkey-and-libya-head-towards-more-cooperation-oil-field>

<sup>90</sup> Al Jazeera, *Greece, Italy sign deal delimiting maritime zones*, 9 June 2020 Available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/6/9/greece-italy-sign-deal-delimiting-maritime-zones>

<sup>91</sup> Il Sole 24 Ore, *Meloni da Erdogan, focus sui migranti: dalla Turchia una sponda con la Libia*, 21 gennaio 2023 Available at <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/italia-turchia-meloni-cena-erdogan-focus-migranti-crisi-medio-oriente-e-ucraina-AF6GwTPC>

<sup>92</sup> L’Economia, Stefano Agnoli, *Libia, il rischio di gas e petrolio: l’Italia nel Mediterraneo e la provocazione turca*, 29 gen 2020 Available at [https://www.corriere.it/economia/aziende/20\\_gennaio\\_29/libia-provocazione-turca-cosi-l-italia-mediterraneo-come-cambia-risiko-petrolio-07b660b0-4271-11ea-8fab-5eae1fe9ccd1.shtml](https://www.corriere.it/economia/aziende/20_gennaio_29/libia-provocazione-turca-cosi-l-italia-mediterraneo-come-cambia-risiko-petrolio-07b660b0-4271-11ea-8fab-5eae1fe9ccd1.shtml)

<sup>93</sup> Ekathimerini, *Erdogan announces Turkish gas find in Black Sea, says will accelerate operations in Med*, 21 August 2020 Available at <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/256097/erdogan-announces-turkish-gas-find-in-black-sea-says-will-accelerate-operations-in-med/>

<sup>94</sup> Middle East Monitor, *Cyprus says Turkiye consent is not needed for EastMed pipeline*, 22 May 2023 Available at <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20230522-cyprus-says-turkiye-consent-is-not-needed-for-eastmed-pipeline/>

<sup>95</sup> Tempi, Leone Grotti, *Ora la Turchia potrà ricattare anche l’Italia con i migranti*, 18 Apr 2020 Available at <https://www.tempi.it/libia-tripoli-migranti-erdogan-turchia-italia-haftar/>

<sup>96</sup> Nordic Monitor, Kenez Levent, *Former ambassador implies Turkey sent arms to Libya in violation of UN resolutions*, 1 December 1 2023 Available at <https://nordicmonitor.com/2023/12/former-ambassador-acknowledges-turkey-sent-arms-to-libya-in-violation-of-un-resolutions/>

influenced by petty readings or proposals of an unrealistic and unsustainable surrender of sovereign rights enshrined in the International Law in the hope of investing on a limited cooperation should be internalised by the Italian Defence and political establishment in order to adopt a credible and linear security strategy in the Med. Above all, self-interest that emboldens dangerous unilateralism undermining the broad security in the Med should be discouraged.

Towards the quarrelling parties in Libya there is a need to adopt a firm opposition to the illegal Turko-Libyan demarcation deal<sup>97</sup> by levelling crippling sanctions on the two and increasing Western military presence in the central Med to counter Turkish presence<sup>98</sup> and provocation.<sup>99</sup> This approach would mean for Western allies to counter Turkish interests<sup>100</sup> in the country that could run contrary to Western interests.<sup>101</sup> Thus, the Italian openness and inaction to Turkish presence in Libya is a breach to Western security and shows a dangerous lack of strategy and appraisal that should be changed into a more forceful position such as the Greek-Cypriot and the French ones implying the impossibility to cooperate with Turkish unilateralism aiming to boost Ankara's leverage to the detriment of the US strategy.<sup>102</sup>

The transactional and at times confrontational relations to NATO allies should demand a concerted effort by NATO powers by checking on it<sup>103</sup> and discourage adventurism<sup>104</sup> and infringement<sup>105</sup> to cooperation according to good practices among allies and rational actors such as the deal between Israel, Lebanon and Israel over maritime rights.

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<sup>97</sup> Middle East Monitor, *Libya expands its maritime borders*, 27 Oct 2023 Available at <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20231027-libya-expands-its-maritime-borders/>

<sup>98</sup> Libya Update, *Erdogan signs motion to extend Turkish troop presence in Libya until 2026*, 26 November 2023 Available at <https://libyaupdate.com/erdogan-signs-motion-to-extend-turkish-troop-presence-in-libya-until-2026/>

<sup>99</sup> Politico, STAMOULI NEKTARIA, *Turkey's Mediterranean claims lead to EU spat*, 12 DECEMBER 2019 Available at <https://www.politico.eu/article/turkey-mediterranean-sea-claims-lead-eu-spat/>

<sup>100</sup> Libya Herald, Zaptia Sami, *Court of Appeal rules to invalidate Libyan-Turkish MoU on cooperation in oil sector*, 19 February 2024 Available at <https://libyaherald.com/2024/02/court-of-appeal-rules-to-invalidate-libyan-turkish-mou-on-cooperation-in-oil-sector/>

<sup>101</sup> The Arab Weekly, *Greek gas exploration to start off Crete amid Turkey tensions, environmental concerns*, 8 Nov 2022 Available at <https://thearabweekly.com/greek-gas-exploration-start-crete-amid-turkey-tensions-environmental-concerns>

<sup>102</sup> Congressional Research Service, *Libya and the US policy*, 19 July 2023

<sup>103</sup> Ekathimerini, Tom Ellis, *US will be 'closely monitoring' Turkey*, 12 February 2024 Available at <https://www.ekathimerini.com/opinion/interviews/1231380/us-will-be-closely-monitoring-turkey/>

<sup>104</sup> Reuters, *Turkey's Erdogan targets joining Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, media reports say*, 17 Sep 2022 Available at <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkeys-erdogan-targets-joining-shanghai-cooperation-organisation-media-2022-09-17/>

<sup>105</sup> Nordic Monitor, Bozkurt Abdullah, *Turkey threatens to kill UN troops in Cyprus, lays claim to entire Mediterranean*, 30 Aug 2023 Available at <https://nordicmonitor.com/2023/08/turkey-threatens-to-kill-un-troops-in-cyprus-lays-claim-on-entire-mediterranean/>

One possible room for manoeuvre could be the US' support for the Seville Map<sup>106</sup> as a way to isolate Turkey by upgrading the role of Greece and Cyprus<sup>107</sup> as more trustworthy pivots.<sup>108</sup> This stratagem would be also the chance for the EU to be regionally relevant and, as implicitly<sup>109</sup> acknowledged by Turkey itself, a possible deterrent and an incentive to be rational instead of a revisionist actor. The instrument of targeting sanctions would also help within the context of articulating the threat Pan-Turkism poses to Mediterranean security.

NATO and the EU should ease the pressure only after a formal agreement between Greece and Turkey and, in the case of the EU, a formal Turkish recognition of Cyprus' sovereignty and independence to broadly foster security and stability<sup>110</sup> compromised by Turkey's unpredictability.<sup>111</sup> Until Turkey sticks to uncooperativeness and a lack of formal recognition of the Greek EEZ and sovereignty of its island along with the pledge to stop infringing on Greek aerial space, the EU and NATO should limit Turkish influence,<sup>112</sup> an open door to

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<sup>106</sup> Keep Talking Greece, *The Seville Map that challenges Turkey, Greece, US and the EU*, 22 Sept 2020 Available at

<https://www.keeptalkinggreece.com/2020/09/22/seville-map-us-turkey-greece/>

<sup>107</sup> Kathimerini News, *US NSC Chief joins Cyprus-Israel talks on maritime assistance*, 26 Jan 2024 Available at <https://knews.kathimerini.com.cy/en/news/us-nsc-chief-joins-cyprus-israel-talks-on-maritime-assistance>

<sup>108</sup> Ekathimerini, *Harris thanks Greek, Cypriot envoys for their support*, 14 November 2023 Available at <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1224893/harris-thanks-greek-cypriot-envoys-for-their-support/>

<sup>109</sup> Nordic Monitor, Kenez Levent, *Architect of Blue Homeland Doctrine accuses Turkish gov't of implicitly endorsing Seville Map in favour of Greece*, 6 Sep 2023 Available at <https://nordicmonitor.com/2023/09/architect-of-blue-homeland-doctrine-criticizes-turkish-govt-for-implicitly-endorsing-the-seville-map-in-favour-of-greece/>

<sup>110</sup> In-Cyprus, *UK bases in Cyprus could be key for Western fight against Houthis*, 8 January 2024 Available at <https://in-cyprus.philenews.com/local/uk-bases-in-cyprus-could-be-key-for-western-fight-against-houthis/>

<sup>111</sup> VOA News, *Russia, Turkey, Iran Condemn Attack on Yemeni Houthis*, 12 Jan 2024 Available at <https://www.voanews.com/a/russia-turkey-iran-condemn-attack-on-yemeni-houthis/7437363.html>

<sup>112</sup> Ekathimerini, Ioannidis Stavros, *Greece, Cyprus, France block Bayraktar financing*, 17 February 2024 Available at <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1231979/greece-cyprus-france-block-bayraktar-financing/>

Islamists,<sup>113</sup> China<sup>114</sup> and Russia,<sup>115</sup> and invest in fellow Greece,<sup>116</sup> Cyprus<sup>117</sup> and Egypt along with Israel<sup>118</sup> as a western outpost in the region<sup>119</sup> in terms of military presence<sup>120</sup> and energy cooperation. Jordan, the UAE and Saudi Arabia<sup>121</sup> constitute ventures<sup>122</sup> for weakening Ankara's unilateralism.

Greece's full NATO commitment<sup>123</sup> and strong credentials<sup>124</sup> make it the fundamental pillar to regional security and a trusted ally in the face of Turkish gambling with Hamas, Iran, and Russia. Moreover, Cyprus' EU commitment<sup>125</sup> and increasing closeness to the US<sup>126</sup> will help counter broad Turkish Eurasianism and strengthen the "Gas Alliance". The allies need to envisage a further strategy to frustrate Turkish goals at natural gas appropriations, thus curbing Turkish

<sup>113</sup> Dado Centre Journal, Troulis M. Mazis I., Turkey's political influence in Libya and the weaponization of the Muslim Brotherhood, 15 August 2021, Available at <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/dado-center/research/turkey-s-political-influence-in-libya-and-the-weaponization-of-the-muslim-brotherhood/>

<sup>114</sup> Xinhua, *China ready to enhance mutual strategic trust, deepen cooperation with Türkiye, says Wang Yi*, 27 July 2023 Available at <https://english.news.cn/20230727/6935404bc56746b6a2be107c45087899/c.html>

<sup>115</sup> Hurriyet, *Türkiye Russia's most reliable gas partner: Putin*, 19 February 2024 Available at <https://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/turkiye-russias-most-reliable-gas-partner-putin-190858>

<sup>116</sup> Forbes, David Axe, *Joe Biden Is Arming Greece So Greece Can Arm Ukraine—And Pro-Russia Republicans Can't Stop Him*, 30 Jan 2024 Available at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidaxe/2024/01/30/joe-biden-is-arming-greece-so-greece-can-arm-ukraine-and-pro-russia-republicans-cant-stop-him/>

<sup>117</sup> STARS AND STRIPES, VANDIVER JOHN, *Navy seals in Cyprus pledge 'unyielding response' to any adversaries in Eastern Mediterranean*, 16 February 2024 Available at <https://www.stripes.com/branches/navy/2024-02-16/navy-seals-cyprus-training-mediterranean-13023054.html?=&subcategory=164%7CDefense+%26+Military>

<sup>118</sup> France24, *Turkey's Erdogan rejects US pressure to cut Hamas ties*, 02 December 2023 Available at <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20231202-erdogan-rejects-us-pressure-to-cut-hamas-ties>

<sup>119</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/article/turkey-united-states-and-israel-hamas-war>

<sup>120</sup> Agenzia Nova, *Greece: the island of Skyros could host a US military base*, 14 August 14 2023 Available at <https://www.agenzianova.com/en/news/grecia-lisola-di-skyros-potrebbe-ospitare-una-base-militare-statunitense/>

<sup>121</sup> Al Arabiya English, Naar Ismaeel, *Royal Saudi Air Force begin Falcon Eye 1 drills in Greece over the Mediterranean*, 17 Mar 2021 Available at <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/03/17/Royal-Saudi-Air-Force-begin-Falcon-Eye-1-drills-in-Greece-over-the-Mediterranean>

<sup>122</sup> Haaretz, Sharif Avi, *OSINT Shows U.S. Deploying More Arms and Troops to Israel, Cyprus and Jordan*, 24 Oct 2023 Available at <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/security-aviation/2023-10-24/ty-article/u-s-deploys-more-arms-and-troops-to-israel-cyprus-and-jordan/0000018b-5cbf-d307-adbb-7dbf1aa80000>

<sup>123</sup> [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_67655.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_67655.htm)

<sup>124</sup> *Joint Statement on the U.S.-Greece Strategic Dialogue*, MEDIA NOTES OFFICE OF THE SPOKESPERSON FEBRUARY 9, 2024

<sup>125</sup> VOA, *Closer Turkey-EU Relations Must Come Through Us, Says Cyprus*, 12 Feb 2024 Available at <https://www.voanews.com/a/closer-turkey-eu-relations-must-come-through-us-says-cyprus-7483870.html>

<sup>126</sup> Mirage News, *US Defense Secretary Discusses With Cypriot Counterpart Giorgallas*, 20 DEC 2023 Available at <https://www.miragenews.com/us-defense-secretary-discusses-with-cypriot-1147605/>



unilateralism.<sup>127</sup> Frustration with Turkish gambling is increasingly making the US aware that Greece<sup>128</sup> and Cyprus<sup>129</sup> are needy replacements to unilateralism and questionable ties to terrorists<sup>130</sup> in the region.

By thinking of additional checks and balances to the recent easing of granting<sup>131</sup> to counter Turkish disruptive actions in the Mediterranean, the EU and NATO would also send a message to Russia and China through their very own partner, Turkey,<sup>132</sup> especially in times of needed unity against the two foes to the West. The EU should<sup>133</sup> finally agree on targeting sanctions<sup>134</sup> and sponsor a new, fairer and more practical initiative to speed up the end to the illegal occupation of Northern Cyprus which would boost the East Med stability and end unilateralism and occupation in times of Russo<sup>135</sup>-Chinese<sup>136</sup> designs.

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<sup>127</sup> Israel National News, Proposal: Gaza aid will be shipped from Cyprus, 04 February 2024 Available at <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/flashes/625349>

<sup>128</sup> *Joint Statement on the U.S.-Greece Strategic Dialogue* MEDIA NOTE OFFICE OF THE SPOKESPERSON 21 FEBRUARY 2023 Available at <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-the-u-s-greece-strategic-dialogue/>

<sup>129</sup> Cyprus Mail, *AIPAC meets discusses US-Cyprus relations with Kombos*, February 21, 2024 Available at

<https://cyprus-mail.com/2024/02/21/aipac-meets-discusses-us-cyprus-relations-with-kombos/>

<sup>130</sup> STARS AND STRIPES, VANDIVER JOHN, *US Air Force sending planes to Greece as part of Israel-Hamas response*, 24 October 2023 Available at

[https://www.stripes.com/branches/air\\_force/2023-10-24/greece-eucom-israel-11812716.html](https://www.stripes.com/branches/air_force/2023-10-24/greece-eucom-israel-11812716.html)

<sup>131</sup> Carnegie, COŞKUN ALPER, *Can the F-16 Deal Revive the Turkish-American Partnership?*, 12 FEBRUARY 2024 Available at

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2024/02/12/can-f-16-deal-revive-turkish-american-partnership-pub-91606>

<sup>132</sup> Daily Sabah, AY HASAN, *Turkey to build regional transit hub port in Eastern Mediterranean*, 28 OCT 2020 Available at <https://www.dailysabah.com/business/transportation/turkey-to-build-regional-transit-hub-port-in-eastern-mediterranean>

<sup>133</sup> DW, *Cyprus president asks Germany to pressure Turkey over divide*, 12 February 2024 Available at <https://www.dw.com/en/cyprus-president-asks-germany-to-pressure-turkey-over-divide/a-68238191>

<sup>134</sup> Financial Times, Cook Chris, Seddon Max, Samson Adam, Schwartz Felicia, *US hits Turkish and Chinese companies over Russia trade*, 12 DECEMBER 2023 Available at

<https://www.ft.com/content/f34a0bc9-12a0-4a98-a42e-4e008430f824>

<sup>135</sup> Business Insider, Atlamazoglou Constantine, *The US is making 'irreversible' progress with a former Russian partner in a tense corner of Europe, but not everyone in NATO will be happy*, Aug 30, 2023 Available at

<https://www.businessinsider.nl/the-us-is-making-irreversible-progress-with-a-former-russian-partner-in-a-tense-corner-of-europe-but-not-everyone-in-nato-will-be-happy/>

<sup>136</sup> Nikkei Asia, *Turkey close to deal with China on nuclear power plant*, 15 September 2023 Available at <https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Energy/Turkey-close-to-deal-with-China-on-nuclear-power-plant>

Above all, NATO long-term security does not need a self-interested and ambivalent transactional partner not favouring NATO regional interests in the Med<sup>137</sup> and its *de facto* regional ally Israel<sup>138</sup> by deepening its political trade and business ties with Hamas, Moscow and Beijing respectively. Forging iron alliances with Hamas, functioning as a strategic base for ISIS<sup>139</sup> and ideologically supporting the Houthis<sup>140</sup> should convince the allies that the Israeli-Greco-Cypriot alliance is the guarantor the West needs. Thus, the selling of F-16 should be partnered with a broad monitoring system,<sup>141</sup> including an ad hoc embargo similar<sup>142</sup> to the previous one, lest Turkey feels entitled to further its ambitions towards Greece and Cyprus, in Libya or the Levant. Given the poor record of Turkey's compliance with its *acquis communautaire* and international conventions, the EU should shelf permanently the accession process and adopt a more political attitude towards Israel.

More US military presence in Greece, such as Alexandroupoli,<sup>143</sup> Larisa,<sup>144</sup> and Crete,<sup>145</sup> and Cyprus<sup>146</sup> itself along with cooperation in the sector<sup>147</sup> will deter any provocation that might undermine NATO standing and counter the EU's inconsistency as a springboard for Iranian proxies and Sino-Russian encroachment

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<sup>137</sup> DOD News, Lopez C. Todd, *After U.S. Downs Turkish Drone in Syria, Focus Remains on Defeat ISIS Mission*, Oct. 5, 2023 Available at

<https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3550462/after-us-downs-turkish-drone-in-syria-focus-remains-on-defeat-isis-mission/>

<sup>138</sup> BBC, Jemma Crew, *Israel recalls diplomats from Turkey in Gaza row*, 28 October 2023

Available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-67252049>

<sup>139</sup> Nordic Monitor, Abdullah Bozkurt, *Pentagon report says ISIS taps Turkey for cash transfers to support global ops*, February 26, 2024 Available at

<https://nordicmonitor.com/2024/02/pentagon-report-says-isis-taps-turkey-for-cash-transfers-to-support-global-ops/>

<sup>140</sup> The Times of Israel, *Iran, Russia decry Houthi strikes; Erdogan: US, UK want to turn Red Sea into bloodbath*, 12 January 2024 Available at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-russia-decry-houthi-strikes-erdogan-us-uk-want-to-turn-red-sea-into-bloodbath/>

<sup>141</sup> Greek City Times, *US to Restrict Use of Sold Weapons by Turkey and Greece, Leaked Document Reveals*, 20 Feb 2024 Available at <https://greekcitytimes.com/2024/02/20/us-to-restrict-use-of-sold-weapons-by-turkey-and-greece-leaked-document-reveals/>

<sup>142</sup> *Paper Prepared in Response to National Security Study Memorandum 2221*, Washington, 15 December 1975 Available at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v30/d56>

<sup>143</sup> DVIDS News, *Alexandroupoli port continues growth from U.S. and NATO presence*, 19 May 2023 Available at <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/445098/alexandroupoli-port-continues-growth-us-and-nato-presence>

<sup>144</sup> Business Insider, *Atlamazoglou Constantine, As fighting rages in Ukraine, the US is sending drones to keep an eye on another tense corner of Europe*, Jan 26, 2023 Available at <https://www.businessinsider.in/international/news/as-fighting-rages-in-ukraine-the-us-is-sending-drones-to-keep-an-eye-on-another-tense-corner-of-europe/articleshow/97334656.cms>

<sup>145</sup> <https://cnreurfcent.cnrc.navy.mil/Installations/NSA-Souda-Bay/>

<sup>146</sup> The Guardian, *Smith Helena, Cyprus faces backlash over use of British bases to bomb Houthis*, 20 Jan 2024 Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/20/cyprus-faces-backlash-over-use-of-british-bases-to-bomb-houthis>

<sup>147</sup> *U.S. Security Cooperation With Greece FACT SHEET BUREAU OF POLITICAL-MILITARY AFFAIRS* 31 OCTOBER 2022 Available at

<https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-greece/>

elsewhere regionally. Such a move would ease the need to rely solely on Incirlik<sup>148</sup> regionally and weaken Iran and the Sino<sup>149</sup>-Russian presence in the Med.

In the face of the Turkish refusal to end the occupation of Northern Cyprus, the gunboat diplomacy and the spacial violations, along with the systematic infringement into Cypriot sovereignty and rights, the EU, NATO and the US should keep supporting Greece by empowering its capabilities<sup>150</sup> and help it become an alternative energy hub<sup>151</sup> to Turkey's one<sup>152</sup> in order to disenfranchise. Awareness regarding incompatibility of Pan-Turkism with NATO-EU strategy means also a clear support for the militarisation of all the Greek islands and arming of Cyprus in view of Turkish past and recent violations and the ongoing occupation of Northern Cyprus, including the small ones such as Kastellorizo or the ones comprising the "grey area", until such a comprehensive and sustainable agreement based on the relevant legal instruments the Turkish government failed to sign that will recognise the legitimate Greek and Cypriot claims over their respective EEZ to ratify is extracted in order to boost a deterrent system. Coercive measures, such as the ones mentioned, are non-negotiable<sup>153</sup> towards unilateralism and revisionism.

### **Conclusion: The Ramifications of Pan-Turkism**

Despite the increasing importance of the renewable resources and the EU green deal, Ankara's Pan-Turkism, refashioned Ottomanism, and gunboat diplomacy which constitute the tenets of Erdogan's opportunism and source of internal electoral support will not likely wither and persuade the political establishment to embrace rationalism and fruitful cooperation according to NATO values.

What caused the almost loss of Turkey to the West has more in common with the inherent Eurasian hegemonic aspirations and imagined grievances and less with the reliable Southeastern EU-NATO and members Israel as it is shown, to name a

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<sup>148</sup> <https://www.incirlik.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/3572269/modern-trkiye-celebrates-100-years/>

<sup>149</sup> Journal of shipping and trade, Oulmakki Ouail, "The implications of Chinese investments in the Mediterranean trade and maritime hubs", 13 November 2023 Available at <https://jshippingandtrade.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s41072-023-00157-6>

<sup>150</sup> Naval News, Mitsopoulos Dimitris, *Greece Expresses Interest In Co-Production Of Constellation-Class Frigates*, 30 Jan 2024 Available at <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2024/01/greece-expresses-interest-in-co-production-of-constellation-class-frigates/>

<sup>151</sup> Reuters, GREECE'S GASTRADE SEES DECISION ON SECOND LNG TERMINAL THIS YEAR, 23 Feb 2023 Available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL8N34T30G/>

<sup>152</sup> Financial Times, Wilson Tom, Samson Adam, *The Turkish terminal helping disguised Russian oil reach Europe*, 29 Jan 2024 Available at <https://www.ft.com/content/e5be1cac-3901-4066-a036-f78546b55eaf>

<sup>153</sup> TRT Haber, 'Ephesus Exercise' panic in Greece, 04 June 2022 Available at <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/yunanistanda-efes-tatbikati-panigi-685740.html>

few, regarding the Turko-Azeri manoeuvres in South Caucasus at the expense of Armenia and the support for Islamists in the region.

For example, the lack of EU-NATO common has emboldened Turkish unilateralism in the Caspian Sea in conjunction with authoritarian Azerbaijan, which is exploited by declining Moscow, expanding Iran and business-seaking China to the detriment of American and European long-term interests, in its military response to the Armenian minority' self-determination in the face of the Azeri State's persecution despite the Western insistence for a mediated role in the crisis.

To conclude, countering Turkey by supporting Greece and Cyprus is to adopt a holistic deterrence system, which is of paramount importance in order to discourage a problematic NATO ally that shows growing symptoms of strategic convergence with the champions of the "Global South" and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation that aim to redefine the security of the Mediterranean and the Western-led security order by, for example, willingly passing up technologies and know-how.<sup>154</sup> Turkish Eurasianism, little brother to Russian Eurasianism and amenable with Chinese propaganda, is a useful opportunity and a safe haven for sanction evasions and permanent business opportunities by Chinese firms in terms of energy and trade, an anarresting issue in the context<sup>155</sup> of the West's need to undermine China and Russia. There is, therefore, a need for NATO to conceptualise Turkey's credentials anew and follow through by borrowing from the broad Franco-American commitment in the pivotal Mediterranean region.

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<sup>154</sup> South China Morning Post, Kinling Loin, *China-Turkey business deals on rise as strategic partnership evolves out of geopolitical strife with West*, 29 November 2023 Available at <https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/3243269/china-turkey-business-deals-rise-strategic-partnership-evolves-out-geopolitical-strife-west>

<sup>155</sup> Natural Gas News, Lakes Gary, *Turkey Gas Hub Aspirations [Gas in transition]*, 5 December 2023 Available at <https://www.naturalgasworld.com/turkeys-gas-hub-aspirations-gas-in-transition-108634#:~:text=With%20gas%20entering%20Turkey%20from,to%20avoid%20Russia%20energy%20supplies.&text=Energy%20relations%20with%20Russia%20are%20considered%20to%20be%20vital%20important%20for%20Turkey>